



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

I am pleased to announce a new organizational structure that not only provides synergies between certain divisions here at AOT, but also allows for us to strategically meet the needs of Arizona communities.

Tina Lynn Miller, former Director of Media Relations and Communications, is now the Director of Communications and Community Development. Tina will assume the majority of responsibilities for community outreach, including tourism and education development, the Arizona Tourism University program and community grants. In addition, she will continue directing the communications activities for the agency.

At the same time, Mary Rittmann, former Director of Travel Industry Marketing, will now be the Director of Trade and Media Relations. In her new position, Mary will continue to manage our domestic and international trade activities as well as direct the media relations and public relations activities for both international and domestic markets.

These changes were effective as of July 1, 2008.

I am tremendously excited about these changes, as they allow us to use the amazing talent we have in this agency to the utmost of their abilities. I appreciate your support during this time of transition. This will allow us to continue doing the great work people come to expect from our agency.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Save the Date: The 28th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism

This year's 28th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism is July 9-11 at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson. The program will be a dynamic mix of fresh industry information and resources that can help you plan for another year of marketing Arizona to audiences around the world. Breakout sessions and speakers will teach you how to take tourism marketing and promotion to a new level. With so many exciting opportunities happening nationally, the Arizona Office of Tourism and its association partners are committed to bringing you the most up-to-date tools available for tourism professionals. For more information and to register for the event, please visit www.aztourismconference.com.

Agents to be "AZAPed" with Arizona Knowledge

Domestic travel agents have been given the "grand" privilege to become Arizona specialists. The Arizona Office of Tourism launched AZAP, *the Arizona Accreditation Program*, an online education program for travel agents to become travel specialists for the Grand Canyon State. The program gives an overview of Arizona travel product as well as key traveler information. It then offers several quizzes that test agent's knowledge of the destination. Upon successful completion of the quizzes, agents receive certification, continuing education credits with the Travel Institute, are eligible for monthly prizes and an Arizona FAM trip. Recommend Magazine, which reaches more than 48,000 agents in the U.S. and Canada and has more than 13,000 active members, produced the online program for AOT. You can access the Web site at www.recommend.com. For more information, contact Jennifer Sutcliffe 602-364-3693 or via e-mail at jsutcliffe@azot.gov or Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

Participate in La Cumbre in 2008

La Cumbre is the premier travel industry conference for the sales and marketing of travel to the United States from Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. This year La Cumbre will be held September 3-5, 2008 in Miami, Florida. The event features a structured, computer-matched marketplace enabling buyers and suppliers to meet during scheduled appointments. Approximately 500 buyers and 90 press members from throughout Latin America will attend this event. Barbara Jackson, AOT's Mexico representative will attend on behalf of Arizona.

If you would like to participate in La Cumbre as part of the Arizona Office of Tourism booth please contact Kristy Swanson for more information at kswanson@azot.gov or 602-364-3696. The cost for registration is \$1,000 for DMOs and \$750 for tourism suppliers. Travel expenses and shipping are extra.

Industry News

Hotels Adopting "Green" Practices

Hotels are increasingly adopting "green" practices as they move past simply asking guests if they prefer to keep using the same towels and sheets. Just a few years ago, hotels that encouraged patrons to use linens and towels for more than a day--and the guests who did so--were applauded as being environmentally friendly. But now, experts in "green" travel say, it's time to start trying a little harder. Only a small fraction of the more than 47,000 U.S. hotels are enrolled in formal green programs. So far, just 11 hotels have been constructed to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEEDS, standards, and there are only 314 Energy Star-certified properties designed to reduce energy consumption. But other hotels are adopting such eco-friendly habits as using glass or biodegradable paper cups instead of Styrofoam, installing carpeting and furniture made from recycle products, and retrofitting with low-flow showers and toilets. (www.LosAngelesTimes.com /Business, Sun.)

Step Away from the Computer Kids – Baby Boomers Embrace Social Media

Advertisers may see the Web and all its iterations—from online video to casual games and social networking—as an ideal channel for reaching young adult consumer, but new data from the AARP and the Center for the Digital Future at the USC Annenberg School for Communication shows that Americans over age 50 are also Web 2.0 denizens. And sometimes they even use the Web more than their younger, more tech-savvy counterparts reports OnlineMediaDaily. For example, 42 percent of consumers over 50 check the Web for news daily or several times a day, compared to just 18 percent of users under 20. And older Americans are increasingly using the Web for fun and interaction.

When it comes to social media, some 70 percent of consumers age 50 and up said that their online community was "very" or "extremely" important to them. So much so that almost 70 percent of them log on daily or several times a day. In contrast, just about half of all social network members under age 20 said the same.

For the AARP, the stats come as no surprise, as the organization made social media features a prime component of its site redesign in February. Photo and video sharing, live journaling and commenting on articles are activities that have caught on with the site's 2.7 million unique monthly visitors, said Patricia Lippe Davis, associate publisher, marketing at AARP.

"Baby boomers are the most socially educated population ever," said Davis, a self-defined Boomer. "They may read the paper, or even go on the Web to get their information, but they're constantly networking with people to verify and expand their knowledge, and that's something we're seeing reflected in their activity on our site." The benefits of older consumers' increased use of social media definitely extend to advertisers, Davis said. Finding a site like AARP.org or BoomJ.com helps to answer the questions of "how to communicate the message and how to get it to extend to word-of-mouth," she said.

Fingerprinting Plan Faces Resistance

Key members of Congress are siding with the airline industry and moving to block the Bush administration from forcing airlines to take fingerprints of foreign visitors before they fly home. The proposition is setting up a clash over a final administration effort to tighten security and immigration by keeping better track of when visitors fly out of the country. U.S. and foreign airlines say fingerprinting 33 million visitors a year would devastate them financially, costing \$12 billion over 10 years, at a time when soaring fuel prices have helped put some airlines out of business and forced others to cut flights.

The House plans to vote this month on a measure barring the Department of Homeland Security from requiring airlines to take fingerprints until the department tests a fingerprint system with airlines. House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., plans to hold a hearing this month to explore alternatives such as setting up government-run fingerprint kiosks near airport checkpoints. Homeland Security policy chief Stewart Baker said the department "is open to being persuaded there is some other more effective and efficient way" to take the fingerprints. *(Page 3A, USA Today)*

Some Airports to Lose 10% of U.S. Service

Published airline schedules for October show about a third of the nation's busiest airports will lose at least 10 percent of their domestic air service compared with a year ago. That will be only a foretaste of the broader and deeper cuts in the months to come if oil prices stay at record levels. Although some small markets are seeing large reductions in percentage terms, large airports in some popular business destinations are also scheduled for significant reductions, according to a USA Today analysis of published schedule data from OAG-Official Airline Guide.

Among airports losing 10 percent or more of their seats in October vs. a year ago: Cincinnati, a Delta hub; Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport, a Continental hub; Cleveland, another Continental hub; Pittsburgh and Phoenix, US Airways hubs. Even some megahubs will be hit hard by the cutbacks. *(Page 3B, USA Today)*